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The Mission Intention

Christian Charity Towards All Nations

In recommending to the prayers of the faithful the mission intention for the month of May — Christian charity towards all nations — the Holy Fathers has once more gone straight to the heart of the fundamental problem facing mankind. It is one year since the end of the war in Europe, and almost a year since that day last August when firing ceased in the Pacific. Those days of victory marked the beginnings of our struggle for peace. And now the Holy Father asks us to pray—to pray that all men, peoples, nations, may bear each to each and all to all, that charity through which alone the peace is made secure.

It is significant that the Holy Father has made this the mission intention. Charity—universal charity that encircles the globe and excludes no one—is the missionary ideal.

There is a story told by a former leader of communism in England—a woman—of how forcibly this ideal of the missioner of world-wide charity was thrust upon her. She was in China, when she heard wonderful stories of a small mission hospital reported to be doing marvelous work in a certain part of that war-stricken land. Anxious to see for herself, she asked to visit it . . .

"What I saw was hard to believe," she writes. "There was scarcely a square foot in the whole place that was not covered by some poor Chinese, sick or wounded. Nobody was turned away; a spot was found for everyone who came. And what care they got! Each and every person was treated with a tender and tireless solicitude that I have seldom seen elsewhere.

"The brave Sisters in charge of the hospital were Europeans. But I was anxious to know from which country they had come, so I went up to the Sister Superior and asked, "Sister, to what country do you and the other nuns belong?'

"Without a moment's hesitation, the Superior made a reply that I shall never forget: 'We don't belong to any country. We belong to the world. We are sisters in Christ. We are sisters of all men!' " . . .

That missionary sister was speaking the Catholic language of charity — a universal tongue which does not call men better or best, high or low, caste or outcaste, black or white or brown, Asiatic, American, European or African—but children of God, and brothers—real brothers—in Christ.

Charity, world-wide, excluding none, is our inheritance. It comes to us with our Faith; it is the command given by Christ Himself, Who died for all men, excluding none. It is not just the ideal of a few, specially dedicated to the work of spreading His Kingdom in far-away lands. It belongs to all of us. Catholic means universal—and every Catholic who is Catholic in deed, not only in name, is truly universal—universal in thought, in desire—above all in his love. Being Catholic, therefore, means that we see the European, the Asiatic, the African as our brothers. It means too that we are alive and on fire with zeal and solicitude for all our brothers—our hungry brothers, our homeless brothers, our persecuted and oppressed brothers everywhere on this earth.

This month the Holy Father begs the special prayers of the faithful that this ideal of all-embracing charity may be restored to the world. Yes, we might as well face it, unless Christian charity is alive in us and in all men, we can have but little hope for any real and lasting peace.

Let us begin—with prayer.

PUNJABI LASSIE

By Sister M. Alma Julia, S.C.M.M.

We read so much about the average American girl—how many times she attends movies, what she eats, what she wears, the size of her town, the length of her schooling. Statistics are often dry, but sometimes they are fascinating. Occasionally they startle us. For instance, I read only recently—"The average life expectancy for an Indian woman from birth is 25 years. In the United States it is 67.8 years." The latter was a figure given by the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company.

There is plenty of room for reflection in the above. My friends in America can expect to see their sixty-fifth year at least. My friends here in India can expect to be burned (if Hindus) or buried (if Mussulmans) by the time they reach twenty-five years of age.

What else do I know about the average Indian girl? And where can I find her? I started to jot down some facts, and at once was in a quandary. There just isn't any average Indian girl. India is too large, too diverse in religions, climate, races and languages. The girls from Malabar, South India are as different from the girls in Assam as Swedes are from Hungarians. The girls of Bengal are as different from the girls in the Northwest Frontier Province as the Italians from the Poles.

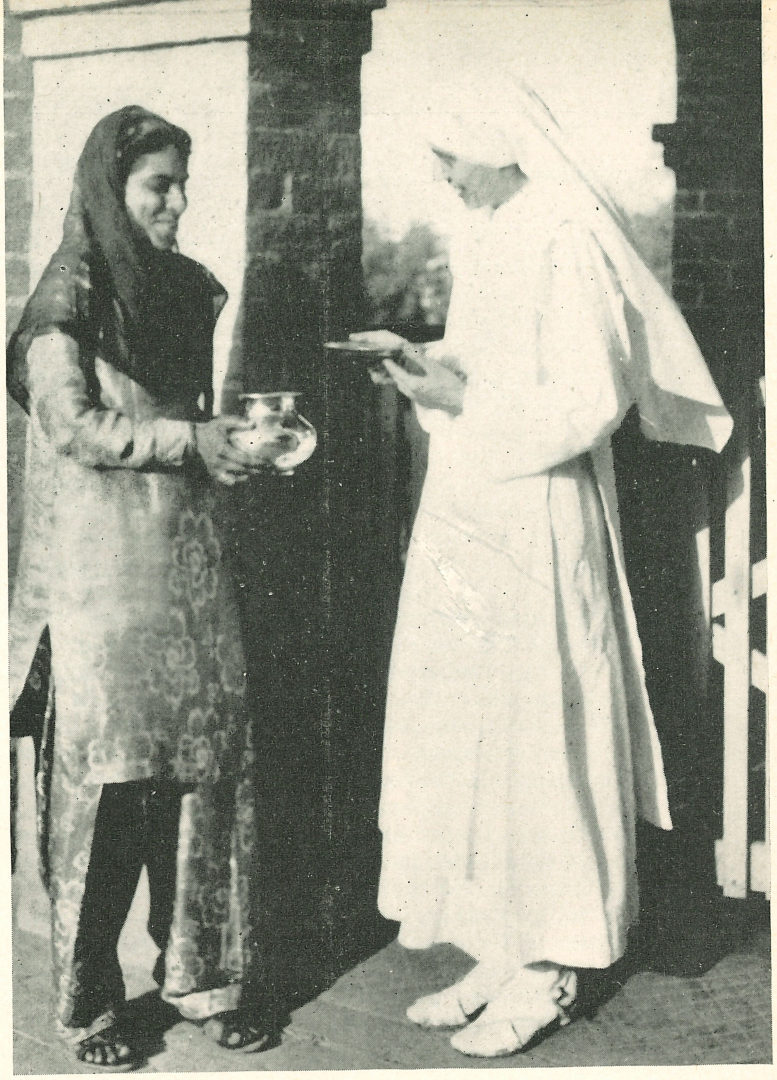
I decided to narrow my search, to take the average girl from the Prefecture in which our mission is located. This district, which bears the romantic name of Kashmir and Kafristan, includes the entire native state of Kashmir, the whole Northwest Frontier Province, and the northern half of the Punjab. As I know nothing about the state of Kashmir, except that it contains four million people of whom ninety percent are Mohammedans, I shall leave it out of my calculations. But of course, much that I will say will apply to the Moslem girls living there also.

That still leaves the Northern Punjab and the Northwest Frontier Province. But here again I meet a snag. The Hindus and Moslems differ so radically that most of what I would say about one would not apply to the other. Finally, I have decided to omit Hindu girls, as this area is almost ninety percent Moslem and Moslem culture predominates.

Now that I am settled, my average girl is drawn from among twenty million Mussulman girls living in the northern fringe of India—the triangle bounded by Kashmir on the northeast, Afghanistan on the northwest, and one of the Soviet republics over the brink of the Himalayas directly north.

She is a farmer's daughter and lives in a village with an average population of about eight hundred. Ninety-five percent of the people in this district are agricultural, for this is the wheat granary of India, fairly prosperous compared to India's starving millions, terribly poor compared to American standards.

These Moslem girls of Kashmir resemble their sisters of the Punjab



A Punjabi lass in typical costume talking with Sister M. Bernadette

It is a mud village, really well built and resembling somewhat our adobe villages in New Mexico. The houses are all tight together and continuous, one-storied, with mud walls, narrow lanes, honey-combed after a fashion. Of course the head man or an occasional richer man may have a two-storied brick house with tile or brick or marble floors instead of mud. But my average girl does not live there.

She lives with her family in one room, perhaps in two. There may be a common courtyard shared by several families, or her home may have a tiny courtyard of its own. Patriarchal arrangements are common, the married sons with their wives and children all living in the grandfather's house. In that case their lot may be happier and the standard of living a little better. The courtyard is shared by the buffaloes, goats and chickens. In the daytime the larger animals are out to pasture, but at night the family must guard them.

In the home of my average girl there are no fireplaces, no windows, no ventilation—just the doors opening out into the courtyard. The other sides of the rooms are taken up by the walls of the adjoining houses. For cooking purposes wood or cow-dung is burned in a fireplace in the courtyard. But sometimes, to heat the rooms in the coldest weather, a fire is made in a small portable stove about the size of a bucket. It is started in the courtyard and is carried inside when most of the smoke has given way to red coals. There are no chimneys.

For every hundred bars of soap used by the average American girl, my average Indian girl uses only one. Soap is a luxury here, the sort of thing you get for a wedding present or at Christmas time. Clothes are washed without soap. In hot weather bathing is also done without soap and in winter it is too cold to bathe anyway. Hands and face are washed regularly after each meal, but no soap is used. Dishes are washed without soap and kettles and frying pans are scrubbed with sand or earth and well rinsed and kept shining in that way.

There is no sewage or garbage disposal in the village except that which nature provides. Vultures, kites and crows all have their share in the scavenging. The plowed fields are also disposal plants and sanitation on the whole is in a pretty bad state. I have seen many houses where the homes and courtyards were kept beautifully clean, while the housewife threw the refuse over the wall or into the ditch along the lane. This accounts in part for India's being a focus for cholera, typhoid, and dysentery, as well as for tuberculosis. Mosquitoes abound and there are flies galore. Everyone has malaria, and harbors amoeba, hookworm and other infections too. Those who survive become anemic, listless or immune. No wonder my average girl dies when she is twenty-five.

But don't think she does not have a happy childhood. She does. But her childhood ends too soon. She is loved and petted and spoiled by her father and mother. She has a grand time with the other youngsters, playing in the fields, driving the goats to pasture, climbing trees, picking berries and doing the hundred and one other things that country children do in America. Of course, she has her chores, more than the average child "back home," but she thinks them fun—bringing her father his lunch when he is plowing at noon-day, running errands for her mother (if she is still alive). And on the way back she can always play games like "hop-scotch" or "run-sheep-run."

In the summertime she goes about bare-foot. During the cold season she wears native sandals or wooden soles fastened with a leather strap. As for her dress, it consists of turkish trousers reaching down to her ankles with a knee-length blouse, just as the older women wear. From the time she is six or eight years old she also has a veil thrown over her head and shoulders. In winter this becomes a shawl or a small blanket.

Oh, yes, my average girl has a grand time until she is ten or twelve. She does not have

to go to school, you see, which makes her childhood one long vacation. No, she does not go to school. The highest literacy for women in all India is in the native state of Travancore, where 36.8 women out of every hundred are literate. In the Punjab it is eighteen men and seven women out of every hundred. The village has a small school attached to the Mosque where the boys are taught to read and write and to count money and do simple things in arithmetic. But there is no school for girls.

My average girl is an important person, however, and quite valuable. India is one place in the world where there are more men than women, and in this section there are only about eight women to every ten men. What happens? As one Indian author has commented, this situation has something to do with the early marriages among the Mussulmans. With the Hindus, early marriage is part of their religion. But among the Mussulmans, the men are marrying the next generation due to lack of women. Others go far afield to find a wife—to Burma, Arabia, even parts of Europe, although few can afford to do that. Some go to other sections of India and buy beautiful, healthy-looking girls from the poorer Hindus and even from Christians who are glad to get the money. And perhaps these girls are better off than if left in their own state to become sweepers' wives.

The average young girl of this section is very beautiful. Where perhaps one out of every ten American women can be called beautiful, seven out of ten of these Indian girls are very beautiful. She is fair of skin compared to her sisters of the south and has expressive eyes and lovely teeth which show easily with a smile. Having a sense of humor she smiles often. In fact, pictures do not do her justice. She has not learned to pose for them and has no mirror in which to improve herself. When "fixed up" for her wedding or some other occasion, with enameled finger and toe nails (Did the West learn from the East?) and a touch of lip-stick and rouge, she is really lovely.

The only draw-back is that her beauty fades so soon after marriage. Fevers, dysenteries, tuberculosis and anemia, or one or more combinations, all tend to break down her health after the first or second baby. Too frequently so much is blamed on child-birth and often it is thought to be the cause of death. But it is not that in most cases. From observation I would say that many times confinement happens to be the last straw, so the latent tuberculosis becomes a "galoping" one, and the anemic conditions brought on by malarial attacks, dysenteries or hook-worm cannot stand the additional loss of blood. At any rate, as the figures show, the woman dies when she is twenty-five, leaving a sorrowing husband and two or three children.

For she is the only wife, although the Moslem law allows a man to have four wives. How can a man have four wives when there are only eight or nine women to every ten men? Of course some do—but they are very few and not the average. In fact, commentators on the Koran, Indians themselves, say that Mohammed did not intend men to have more than one wife except where there was an excess of women over men as in the Arabia of his day due to continuous warfare between tribes. Then he considered it the duty of men to take enough wives so that no woman would be husbandless.

And take the matter of divorce. The Koran allows a man to divorce his wife for no other reason than his own free will. In actual practice, in this part of the country at least, there are very few divorces. A man is not likely to divorce his wife when it is so difficult to get another. A woman can divorce her husband only under certain conditions. But as the children go to the husband she is not likely to divorce him and leave them. On the whole, family life is very stable, much more so than in the United States at present.

But to get back to our average girl—better days are ahead for her, I hope. For one thing, her father or husband or uncle is now returning from the wars. The returning soldiers from the first war brought back new ideas, the raising of the standard of living and other improvements. The soldiers of this war have travelled far and made money and learned much. The veteran knows more of the skills and sciences than his father or uncle. He knows something about malarial control and germs, vitamins and foods and new farm methods.

Perhaps the next generation of girls will live to be 45 instead of 25—perhaps even 65. They deserve all we can give them.

MARY . . . which signifieth "Star of the Sea" and suiteth well the Maiden Mother, who may meetly be likened unto a star. A star giveth forth rays without any harm to herself . . . O thou, whosoever thou art, that knowest thyself to be here not so much walking upon firm ground, as battered to and fro by the gales and storms of this life's ocean, if thou wouldest not be overwhelmed by the tempest, keep thine eyes fixd upon this star's clear shining.

—St. Bernard of Clairvaux

ADEQUATE MEDICAL CARE FOR INDIA

By Sister M. Elise Wijnen, S.C.M.M., M.D.

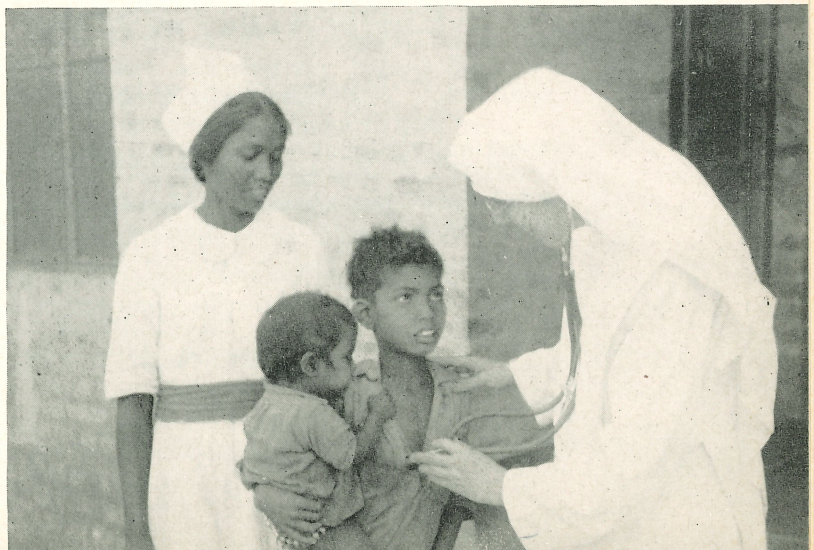
Both the United States and the United Kingdom are buzzing with plans to make this vale of tears an earthly paradise. Now that the war is over there will be freedom, prosperity, education, and above all, the means to retain or regain perfect health. Plans and schemes, private, local and governmental, will bring the benefits of modern medicine to everyone, regardless of income or locality. It all sounds a little too good to be true, perhaps, but then our reach should exceed our grasp. Even if the millenium is not gained in a day or in a lifetime, the machinery for the improvement in general health certainly exists, and can be made available where it is still missing. With a modicum of wisdom and good will the health of England and America, already the best in the world, can be made the best possible. It remains only to be up and doing, to transfer the plans from paper to reality.

But what about the rest of the world? India, for instance? People live and die, sicken and suffer, here the same as elsewhere, rather, worse than elsewhere. Millions, literally millions, die every year in this subcontinent, unnecessarily, unrelievedly, uncared for. The annual death toll from preventable and curable diseases is appalling: one and a half million from malaria, half a million from tuberculosis, 100,000 from cholera, 260,000 from the dysenteries, 162 out of every 1,000 newborn babies, etc., etc. It takes a Bengal famine, with a loss of 700,000 lives, to wake up the world to the plight of India. Yet the steady annual drain due to preventable diseases is much greater, even if less dramatic.

What is to be done about it? What can be done about it? The need is so great and the laborers so few. Against this mountain of illness and suffering stand just 50,000 doctors and 7,000 nurses. The beds available for all kinds of illness number scarcely 74,000! That means: one doctor for 8,000 people, one nurse for 56,000, one bed for 6,000. The minimum proportions for adequate care are: one doctor for 1,500 people, one nurse for 500, one bed for 150. Both England and America have more than that, but even to reach that level India will have to multiply its number of doctors by five, its nurses by 120, and its beds by forty.

The job is indeed mountainous. The questions that occupy the minds of those responsible for the health of India are: Where do we start? How can money and ingenuity best and most quickly remedy this situation? For it is obvious that perfect medical care is not possible in India until there are many other changes as well—a higher standard of living, more education, political unity and freedom, etc. But India's suffering cannot wait until all this is accomplished. Concomittantly, efforts must be made to increase and improve medical care in this country.

Statistics do not tell the whole story. Even the little care that is available does not measure up in quality to that of the West. There are exceptions, of course, but on the whole hospitals in India do not compare, either in staff or in equipment, with those of the United States. Medical education and nurses' training, again with laudable exceptions, are inferior. Postgraduate work, always the best guage of



Medical progress depends primarily on the staff. Training Indian nurses is most important. Here Sister M. Elise Wijnen, M.D. examines a young patient while a student nurse observes.

the level of ordinary graduate education, is almost non-existent in Indian universities. Specialties are neglected, research is not fostered, autopsies are few and practically limited to police cases. As a result, even the under-graduate medical training lacks those high ideals of interest in scientific matters and devotion to duty that we take for granted from our own doctors and nurses.

Here is where the axe must be laid to the root. Lt. General J. B. Hance, Director General of the Indian Medical Service, said truly and publicly that the main short term endeavor of the government in this matter must be an increase in well trained personnel. Medical progress depends primarily on the *quality* of the staff, secondly on the needed equipment to enable that staff to work at full efficiency, and lastly on the proper housing of patients and staff. As he put it: "What we want to provide is a maximum amount of facility with a minimum amount of facade." Thus, the lakhs of rupees that are being put at the disposal of central and local medical bodies are going to be spent, first of all on medical colleges and nursing schools, and then on teaching hospitals, sanatoria for leprosy and tuberculosis, etc.

Unfortunately, a man cannot lift himself by his own bootstraps. It seems doubtful if India can do the job by herself. To train medical students and nurses properly, one must surely be properly trained himself. Certain it is, at any rate, that Catholic medical education cannot be provided by Indians. Where do we break into this vicious circle? The best way out, in our estimation, is to invite teachers from abroad. Given the right inducements, many ambitious young specialists will probably be glad to build themselves a career away from home.

This, in a nutshell, is the ambitious program of the Catholic Hospital Association of India. Despite its youth and lack of resources, it aspires at once to the heights: a complete Catholic medical college, with a collegiate school of nursing attached. There Catholic students will be taught by first class professors from the United States and elsewhere. For this purpose men and women will be chosen who will impart to the young Indians not only the highest ideals and achievements of medicine, but also the unchanging ethics and moral precepts of our Holy Church. Then, surely, we will see blooming in India that devoted care of every single patient, no matter how poor and insignificant in the eyes of the world, such as can be based only on the Second Commandment of Christianity.

Yet, while we have many ideals, we have no illusions. Catholic medical care in this country is still in the nursery. There are 56 Catholic hospitals in India, of which only three have recognized nursing schools: St. Martha's in Bangalore, and our own two Holy Family Hospitals of Rawalpindi and Patna. Thus we know only too well that there is no substantial basis on which we can build this medical college, no trained personnel to run it, no money to finance it . . . nothing but the desperate need of it, and God's help to supply our deficiencies. In this case, the Catholic Medical College is not the summit and crown of a large and efficient circle of Catholic medical institutions. Rather it will be, we hope, the source and feeding center of trained medical people — doctors, nurses, midwives, pharmacists, specialists of all kinds. From it will go out the staff needed to establish Catholic hospitals, first class, well run, well equipped, able in their turn to train others. This is no time for half measures. In one bold stroke we can win the game. God helps those who help themselves.

Christ Asks For Bread . . .

Hearken all of you individuals and peoples who have the means in one way or another to come to the aid of your brothers, hearken to the prophet's exhoration: "Deal thy bread to the hungry" . . .

It is not only the earth's hungry who at this moment hold out to you their suppliant hands. Christ himself asks you for the bread of which His poor are in want. Every mouthful of food which you give to them is given to Him. Every mouthful which you refuse them is refused to Him. . . .

—Pope Pius XII

WEDDING DRUMS

By Gertrude Emerson

A thudding of drums broke the quiet of a February afternoon. A little procession was passing along the cart road at the end of the tahsil path. Four men carried a boy in a red palanquin. Others straggled alongside the *doli,* and two drummers brought up the rear, big rounded drums criss-crossed with leather thongs slung from their necks. "A bridegroom," the Tahsildar announced, and he called out to the procession to stop.

The center of attention was a bewildered little boy with fresh sandal paste streaked across his forehead, a red turban and a red cloth drawn about him like a shawl. He was certainly the unhappiest bridegroom I had ever seen. I asked how old he was, and the father replied, "Ten." They were of the Ahir caste and were on their way to the village of the bride, four miles farther on.

Although this was a February marriage, February is not an auspicious month for weddings. Rama and Sita, Hindu deities, who experienced so much suffering and misery, began their married life in this month. The months are conveniently auspicious after the spring harvest, from the middle of March to the middle of June, and in November and December, after the autumn harvest. Soon weddings were no longer a novelty in the village of Pachperwa. All through the hot season the drums sounded. After a while I ceased to run down the hill every time I heard them and hold up processions to take photographs.

The bridegrooms' processions were all more or less alike except that some were larger and noisier than others. A tatterdemalion band of drummers, flute players and cymbal players—in any event drummers—marched along either before or behind the doli. The *barat,* the procession of male relatives and family friends, was made to cover as much space as possible to emphasize the importance of the bridegroom's family. A relative or old family servant bore the gifts for the bride in jars or baskets swung from a shoulder pole—jewelry, vermilion in a small wooden jar for marking the part in the bride's hair, some saris, including the one the bride would wear during the wedding.

But all the interest centering in the bride's clothes in the West, in India is transferred to the clothes of the bridegroom. He becomes suddenly metamorphosed from nobody into somebody, an astonishing figure in a turban of auspicious color, red, yellow, or pink, and a strange dress of one of the same colors. He is also adorned with puja paste, put on his forehead by the family priest.

Our village bridegrooms ranged in age from nine or ten to full maturity. The doli itself was usually a simple box-like affair, roofed, but open at the sides. Borrowed elephants sometimes lent special glory to a wedding procession, the bridegroom riding in state in an ornamental howdah.

Mohammedan bridegrooms, in dresses like those of Hindus, and with the same reinforcement of musicians and friends, were distinguished only by long transparent veils hanging in front of their faces. Generally, too, instead of being carried by palanquin, they sat astride horses led by wedding retainers.

But with all the glamour of the wedding processions, something was missing. No woman ever took part. All this drumming and tootling, these gay clothes, this excitement, were solely for the bridegroom, more often than not a mere child.

It is only as recently as the year 1930 that child marriage in India has ceased to have legal sanction. The earliest attempt on the part of the government of India to interfere in the domain of Hindu marriage relations was a law enacted in 1892 forbidding the consummation of marriage for girls under thirteen. Since a child bride often went to her husband's family before this age, enforcement was difficult, if not impossible. At the beginning of the century, two states under the control of Indian rulers, Mysore and Baroda, passed laws designed to restrict child marriages within their territory.

Adherents to the cause of a later marriage age are drawn from all groups—the Brahmos of Bengal, the Arya Samajists of North India, even certain high-caste orthodox Hindus, whose custom of forbidding widow remarriage has made them realize vividly the tragedy of life-

(Reprinted from Miss Emerson's book, VOICELESS INDIA, through the courtesy of The John Day Company, New York, Publishers)

A bride and bridegroom of Bengal

long widowhood that may overtake their daughters. Western reformers have naturally joined the ranks or led them. The present Child Marriage Act, passed by overwhelming majority in the Legislative Assembly, is applicable to all communities. It makes it a criminal offense to arrange, solemnize, or participate in the marriage of a girl below the age of fourteen or a boy of eighteen, and the penalty for infringement is one month's imprisonment or a fine of 1,000 rupees. The political upheaval into which India has lately been thrown overshadows every other phase of life in the country, but the law is there to stay, an epochal landmark on India's road of social progress. When I was in Pachperwa, however, child marriages were still celebrated with tranquil ignorance of impending reform.

The wedding months slipped along, and I was growing almost tired of listening to Fakire's nightly enumeration of the weddings that had occurred in surrounding villages. One evening he appeared at the window screen after dinner. "The wedding procession has started," he announced.

"What wedding procession?"

"The Halwai wedding to which you are invited."

Fortunately my social engagement book in Pachperwa was not overcrowded. Throwing a scarf over my head, for the sake of propriety, I followed Fakire, who led the way carrying a stout lathi and a lantern.

Except for a torch or two the street was lighted only by the moon, so when I reached the Halwai house it took me a second or two to make out that I was at a familiar confectioner's shop. A crowd of women massed behind me sang the bridegroom's welcome. The procession itself was now arriving. The first knight, all in red with a huge red turban topped by a basket frame from which strings of straw flowers dangled, was riding a nervous little horse with bristling mane. The pleasant-faced grandmother who had often beckoned me to sit down in the shop and eat some sweets offered the "door welcome" to the bridegroom, waving over his head first a butter churn and then a husking pole, intimate symbols of domesticity. As soon as she had finished with the first knight she repeated the ritual for the second knight, garbed in orange, who rode another bad-tempered little steed. At this point I was warned to duck and avoid a shower of small stones which the women and the bridegroom's party began flinging at each other, in mock antagonism.

This was a double wedding of two motherless daughters of the Halwai household with two brothers from Utraula. The first lad was a handsome boy of sixteen or seventeen, but the fat-cheeked little brother of twelve had a pouting expression, as if he did not in the least enjoy being married. Of course there was no sign of the brides. After the formal welcome, a presentation of money to the red and orange bridegrooms was in order. Then they rode away again, the crowd dispersed and the street relapsed into an empty little lane, in which the alchemy of the moonlight turned the mud to liquid silver.

The actual ceremony, I learned, would not take place until later—at mid-night. But just then the friendly grandmother appeared in a saffron-tinted sari, took me by the hand and insisted that I join the women's procession. A minute later, linked arm in arm with the Halwai grandmother, I found myself in the odd role of leading a Hindu wedding procession through the village of Pachperwa.

A band was playing full blast, and the women—this time the bride's friends and relatives — were all singing. Above the drums and clashing cymbals their song rose and fell with trembling modulations and little minor waterfalls of sound.

We trailed up and down some alleys and came out in a clearing near a grain parcher's shop. Into the tiny room we all crowded, at any rate as many of us as could get in. The parching oven rose from the middle of the floor; jars of sand stood about. A flickering light from the open mouth of the oven, into which dead leaves were being thrust, threw a red glow over all the shrouded figures.

The smoke from the fire made my eyes smart terribly, but I did not dare close them for fear of missing something. The woman at the oven was ceremonially anointed with oil, and red lead was painted along the parting of her hair. Then, as she squatted near her fire and sifted the hot sand from the parched rice, all the women began cursing. One of the women explained that they were saying "bad things" about the grooms' relatives, particularly their uncles. Marriage ceremonies among the lower Hindu castes reflect many evidences of the primitive marriage by capture. A mock enmity is set up between the bride's people and the groom's. The pelting of the bridegroom's party with small stones, and this use of *gali*, or insulting language, directed against the bridegroom's family, were curious survivals that had long outlived their meaning. At last the parched grain, which was to be used later in the evening, was stowed away in an enormous cloth, and we marched back with it through the village, children yelling, musicians dinning, women singing, dogs barking.

During a further interlude for feasting I went home to rest. It was just half-past two when I rejoined the same women with whom I had gone in procession to the grain parcher's earlier in the evening. They were fetching two washerwomen and two barber women to dress the brides. We all went on together to the Halwai house. Passing through three pitch-black rooms, we came out in a small open court. An iron chair for me was placed against a wall of the court. Almost at my feet were two festooned water jars, each supporting a saucer of dry barley. On top of the barley saucers were other saucers of oil with lighted wicks—the sacred marriage fire. Two posts erected beside the jars and joined above by a straw rope served in this poor little household for a marriage pavilion.

I heard a splash. In a corner of the court one of the two Dhobins (washerwomen) was dumping jars of water over the head of a slim girl of fourteen. The grandmother stood by. A new yellow sari was produced and modestly put on above the wet one, which was then allowed to drop to the ground. The bride was directed to step on a tiny up-turned saucer placed in front of her and to crush it with her heel. Nobody needed to explain the symbolic meaning of this act. The childhood home lies one way and another way the home of the new husband's father, to which before long, the bride will be going in her covered palanquin.

The bride smoothed back her wet hair with her hands. A white muslin cloth was draped about her, making her look like a little cocoon, and she was turned over to one of the barber women, who painted five neat red stripes across her insteps and a broad line around the soles of her feet and tinted her toe nails pink.

The Pujari who always officiated at the shrine near my bungalow now came into the court, wearing a faded red scarf around his shoulders. He inspected a brass plate of bel leaves, uncooked rice, tumeric, and other puja essentials. He commanded certain missing things to be brought and seated himself on the ground near the two jars. The shrouded little bride sat down opposite. Obeying instructions given by the Brahmin, she reached out a hand and dropped a bel leaf or bit of rice at the foot of the auspicious barley jar.

Photo from Three Lions

An ox-drawn purdah cart carries the bride and maids of honor to her new home. Heavy curtains guard the occupants from the curious glances of strangers.

At last the red bridegroom entered with a few of his party. He sat down on a low board, facing the bride, who was huddling on the floor, supported by the barber woman. He cast a curious glance at the shapeless bundle in front of him, wondering, I suppose, what sort of wife he was marrying.

The grandparents, acting in place of the brides' parents, the bride, the groom, and the village Pujari all had parts to play in the puja that followed. The marriage ritual was in Sanskrit—recited in a monologue which was relieved at one point when the brides' offerings of copper kitchen pots were produced and surveyed critically by the pundit representing the bridegrooms. The bridegrooms' trays of folded clothes, jars of red ointment and silver jewelry were also brought in. The jewelry was examined with interest by the women present, who silently passed it from hand to hand.

The moment had come for the last act in the mute drama. The red bridegroom and the orange bridegroom stood up, took the jars of vermilion from their gift trays, leaned over, and, for the first time looking under the veils, traced the red line of wifehood down the parts in the brides' hair. Then the garments of bride and bridegroom were symbolically knotted. Together, the bride bending over while the bridegroom guided her from behind, they made the seven turns around the ceremonial jars bearing the sacred fires. After every turn a small boy, brother of the brides, poured over the covered heads several handfuls of parched rice. A mock struggle ensued, relic of old days, in which each bridegroom in turn pushed the brother away.

"Become thou now my partner, as thou hast paced all the seven steps," the Pujari chanted, speaking for the bridegrooms. "Thy partnership have I gained; apart from thee now I cannot live; apart from me do thou not live; we each shall be an object of love to the other. Combine I now thy mind, thy action, thy senses with mine." The weddings were over.

The Mission Clipper

"PEARL OF THE CHURCH IN AFRICA"

One-sixth of the population of Uganda, called the "pearl of the Church in Africa", is Catholic and converts are being baptized at the rate of twenty thousand a year. Uganda has its own native bishop, Bishop Joseph Kiwanuka, and more than one hundred African priests. Sixty years ago there were two hundred Catholics in Uganda. Twenty-two were martyred in 1885. They were burned to death because they would not renounce Christianity and Christian virtue, and were canonized in 1918.

EDUCATION FOR LEADERSHIP —MYSORE, INDIA

According to Bishop Feuga of Mysore, South India, a well-balanced educational program, with particular stress on higher education, would answer many of India's problems, particularly those of leadership. Bishop Feuga himself has nearly doubled the number of Catholic schools in his diocese in the five years of his episcopate.

"Our country is standing at the cross-roads of her history," he said. "She must be prepared to provide the leaders who will guide her to a glorious future. For this reason I am anxious to act upon the suggestion of the Maharajah to open a Catholic university college in Mysore. I have given up my episcopal residence to be used as the first unit in this ambitious undertaking and hope during my brief stay in the United States to enlist the sympathy of the American people in erecting a bulwark of strength and leadership for the people of India."

—The Register

BETTIAH MISSION—PATNA

Bettiah, up in the northwestern corner of Patna Mission, was a favorite stopping place for the Capuchin missionaries on their way to the missions of Tibet and Nepal.

Two hundred years ago a mission station was founded there by the Capuchin Fathers. At Christmas, 1945, the parish of Bettiah celebrated its second centenary. Much good has been done in Bettiah during the past two hundred years. The first Christians were of stern stuff and loved God and His grace more than all else.

Today there are about three thousand Catholics in Bettiah. Many have gone to other centers and have taken the Faith there with them.—**Patna Mission Service.**

THE FIRST WORD

The first word written by the Catholic children of Malabar, South India is the name of God. At about the age of four years, the child is sent to the "Asan"—a sort of kindergarten teacher—with rice, beetle-leaves, tobacco and a silver coin. The child offers these things with both hands to the teacher, bowing before him. Then the "Asan" makes the child write for the first time the name of **God** in the rice which the child has brought.

STAUNCH CATECHUMENS

A few months ago, when the news spread in Tuticorin, India, that 300 Hindus were to be received into the Catholic Church, many of their townsfolk were resentful. They showed their indignation by burning the converts' huts to the ground, thrashing them and persecuting them in many ways. Nevertheless, not one of the catechumens faltered in his profession of Faith. In memory of their wonderful courage, the Bishop of Tuticorin, Most Rev. Tiburtius Roche, S. J., warmly congratulated them and renamed their village "Sahayamadhapuram," which means "The Village of Our Lady Help of Christians." **—The Cowl**

A poor man without illness is half a rich man.

—Chinese saying.

The Whole Family Prays In Malabar

Family Prayer in Malabar

By Sister M. Pauline, S.C.M.M., R.N.

Not long ago I was given a pamphlet advocating the daily family rosary by Father Patrick Peyton, C.S.C. It set me thinking how fully and completely the "family spirit" of morning and evening prayers in common is kept here in Malabar, South India among all Catholic families. Every home has its devotional altar with the favorite saint's replicas. Each morning it is the delight of the children of the household to gather fresh flowers for the shrine and make garlands for the statues.

Before the shrine family prayers are always said. Night prayers begin in the evening as soon as the sun sets, when the Angelus is rung from the parish church. There is no twilight here, so darkness falls immediately. The father or the head of the family leads in the Angelus and all join him. The rosary is recited, each decade being said in turn, usually beginning with the youngest. It is the little child's delight and great ambition to be "grown up" enough to perform this dignity—usually at the age of three. The rosary is then followed by a chaplet to the Sacred Heart or in honor of the Five Wounds of Our Lord, a short prayer to St. Joseph, the Litany of the Sacred Heart, and five Our Father's, Hail Mary's and Gloria's for the souls in purgatory. These prayers are said to the tolling of the bell from the parish church.

On all Saturdays of the year, which are dedicated to Our Lady, the full fifteen decade rosary is recited in common. And these are only the *minimum* prayers. Some families add others according to their devotion, such as a prayer and litany in honor of St. Therese of the Child Jesus, or some other saint. On each first Friday the family recites together the Act of Consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. A statue of the Sacred Heart is solemnly enthroned in every Catholic home when it is first built, a ceremony always carried out with great devotion and pomp. After the enthronement a dinner is given for the officiating priest and invited guests, besides the family. Each year, on the anniversary of the enthronement, a renewal ceremony is also held.

But this is not all. During the months of March, May, June and November, special devotions are added to the evening prayers. Each family has a book containing these devotions, which consist of appropriate readings and a short story about the saint of each day, ejaculations to be said, and good deeds recommended, such as hearing Holy Mass, receiving Holy Communion, giving alms, etc. Sometimes the child appointed to do this reading tries to skip a few paragraphs or a story—but the culprit is always checked immediately by one of the elders who know the reading practically by heart. All these night prayers are said before the evening meal is served. Here in Malabar the people eat around nine o'clock as it is cooler then and everyone is refreshed after the heat of the day.

In the morning the prayers are usually begun very early, from five o'clock onward, as they must be finished before the men go out

to the fields to begin their day's work. The very young children do not get up for these early family prayers, but have their own time later in the day. The Litany of the Saints is recited first, and is followed by prayers for the dead, and to Our Lady and the Guardian Angels. Last of all the Angelus is said.

Here in Malabar, the grandmothers have their rosaries in their hands practically all the time. Often their grandsons tease them, saying that they count words instead of Hail Mary's on their beads.

Indeed, among the Catholic people of this part of India life is deeply religious. And we may with all sincerity believe that the custom of family prayers fosters many vocations among the boys and girls of Malabar. From the Changanacherry Diocese alone, of which His Excellency, the Rt. Rev. James J. Kalacherry, D.D. is the Bishop, over three hundred young men and women have gone out to the distant dioceses of India to preach the Gospel and minister to the sick and poor. Working within the diocese at present are 375 secular priests, 126 religious and 1,046 sisters—making this diocese one of the outstanding bishoprics of India.

Jottings from Abroad

Holland

The first message from Holland in several weeks tops the list of news from home and abroad this month. Sister M. Agatha is the faithful scribe. . . . In a letter dated March third she writes:

"Our Dutch house now has forty-eight sisters. This week five new postulants are expected. On the twenty-fifth of March we are going to have the ceremonies of reception and profession. Six will receive the habit and seven will make their first profession, so the ceremony will be quite a large one.

"As in all the Medical Mission houses, our house here is already too small. Seventeen sisters are doing work outside the house, helping with the rehabilitation program, nursing, etc., so the remaining ones just fit. At present we are building a wooden chapel outside, opposite the back door. We hope it will be ready for the twenty-fifth. Otherwise we shall have to hold the ceremonies in the chapel of a school of midwifery about twenty minutes' walk from our place."

India

Mary Giri

Mother Dengel continues her narrative from India—this time from the South, where she has been for some time. She writes:

"I have been one month in Malabar now, and tomorrow Sister Pauline and I are starting out on a tour of various places we have been asked to visit. In the whole of Travancore, a native state of six million inhabitants, there is no railway—only a short line from Madras Presidency to Alwaye. One has to travel by bus, which is usually crowded to overflowing and does not run often. Private cars are few and far between and terribly expensive. The main traffic is by bullock cart and shank's mare. Travancore is very different from the northern parts of India.

Nature's paradise

"Nature here is a paradise—luxurious, very elastic, beautiful palms of all kinds. I am able to recognize at least five different varieties now, besides a great many fruit trees. In the forests there is also the precious teakwood tree which is too hard for the white ants to tackle except in case of famine. The flowers are beautiful too—brightly colored hibiscus are picked every morning by the novices and placed in front of the statue of Our Lady. They are just laid there, not put in a vase. In front of our house here there is a statue of the Sacred Heart which is enshrined in a beautiful creeper called the "Queen of the Night." It has lovely clusters of red flowers which turn white at night and give a sweet scent. There are also very colorful shrubs in the garden.

Land of spices

"Most beautiful of all is the night scene, with the bright moon and the clear constellations shining through the palms and mangoes and jackfruit trees, making exquisite shadows—and with it and over all the scent that permeates the air. The smells of India are notorious and since I have come to the South, I find that in this as in everything else, India is a land of contrasts. This part is a land of aromatic spices and sweet perfumes, although once in a while the breeze wafts over to us the smoke from a neighboring funeral pyre. Here the people are allowed to burn the dead right on their own grounds. In other parts of India the burning is usually done on the river banks.

Medical meeting

"Last night we had a meeting here on the compound to promote the idea of Catholic hospitals in India. The setting was very nice. The stage was on the steps of the Church, while the audience sat under a big mango tree.

"The meeting began in the cool of the evening at six o'clock. There was an introductory speech by Mr. Mathew, a prominent lawyer who lives next door to us. He was informed most accurately and well about the history and development of our Society. Then a group of little girls from the Latin Rite

school sang and danced. After that His Excellency, Bishop Thomas Tharayil, the Coadjutor Bishop of Kottayam, who is also of the Syro-Malabar Rite, spoke. He read a passage from a speech by Gandhi in which the latter praises the work of the Catholics for the lepers and says that it is worthwhile to inquire into the source from which their heroism springs. There followed more song and dance, and then my speech.

"After my talk the little girls appeared on the scene, this time each with a doll in her arms and singing a sweet lullaby, all in Malayalam, of course. There was also the conventional vote of thanks by the Secretary of the Catholic Club under whose auspices the meeting was held. In conclusion the Bishop urged the parents not be merely passive regarding vocations and allow the children who of their own accord wished to do so to enter religion—but to actually foster vocations as well.

"I almost forgot to tell you that at the end of the meeting Mr. Mathew proposed three cheers for the Pope, since it was the anniversary of his coronation, also three cheers for the Bishop—and finally I came in for three also! Mission life certainly provides its funny moments! Anyone with a sense of humor gets many opportunities to lubricate the wheels of life—but woe to those who have no lubricant!

Showers—and showers!

"My stay in Travancore has been most interesting and very pleasant. The climate, although sunny and bright, is now heavy. Actually the temperature ranges only between 75 and 96 degrees. The mornings and evenings are cool, or rather cooler, and the nights are not too bad. During the day one simply must not go out into the sun. The bath is a daily ritual for all and an absolute necessity. It consists mostly of pouring water over oneself, as there are no bath tubs, not even tin ones, and no showers in our sense of the word. One makes one's own shower All the water has to be painstakingly pumped—and at present the wells are very low and in some places dry. The water here is very soft and washing is done in cold water.

"My plans are to leave India soon, but as yet I have no passage. So many people want to go to England now, and it is difficult to get one. Once more, as always, the greatest need out here is zealous laborers for the vineyard! Pray the Lord of the harvest to send them."

Animated explanations! Sister M. Laetitia, a patient and a student nurse at Holy Family Hospital in Patna.

Rawalpindi

From Rawalpindi, Sister M. Nicola sends news—typically about spring, with talk of cleaning, walks, etc.

"I am sitting outside in the sun," she writes, "as the weather is lovely, real spring. This morning we took several stoves out of the hospital rooms and next week the white-washers and painters are coming and we will begin our spring cleaning in earnest. Everything is very dusty, especially this year as we have had very little rain. The fields are so dry, and only poor crops are expected.

Gypsies and a temple . . .

"The other day Sister Dolores and I went with several of the nurses for a long walk through the fields. We intended to go as far as a Hindu temple, but on the way we met a whole crowd of gypsies. As soon as they saw us they came, the blind, the crippled, women with babies in their arms. In no time at all there was a whole row of them lined up waiting for us to pass. Whenever we go out with Sister Bernadette to visit some patient on a Sunday afternoon we inevitably land in the midst of a group of gypsies. There are quite a number around here.

"When finally we reached the temple, we found the doors locked. But the Hindu nurses who were with us guided us around and we found some open windows. After we had taken off our shoes the nurses showed us all about and explained the names of their various gods and goddesses. These were clothed in beautifully embroidered silks.

"We have a lovely group of nurses here—twenty-four in all, with six more expected some time this week. Soon we hope to be able to send some more definite news about the building of the new hospital . . ."

R. I. P.

Please pray for the repose of the souls of:

Rev. Leo P. Vanderwill, Ida, Michigan.

Sister Mary Alexis, Hartford, Conn.

Sister Mary Philomena, Philadelphia, Pa.

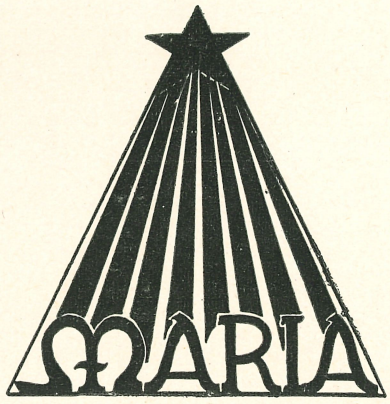
Mrs. Marie Chester, Philadelphia, Pa.

Mr. C. C. Thompson, Santa Barbara, California.

Mr. John Godfrey, Philadelphia, Pa.

Mrs. F. S. Horn, Philadelphia, Pa.

May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.



O Blessed Mother of God:
Open the gate of compassion
To us whose hope is in thee,
That we may not be confounded,
But be preserved from adversity, through thee,
Who art the Salvation of CHRIST-ian folk.

O thou who art
A well of tenderness,
Vouchsafe unto us thy compassion,
Mother of God!